



# The Rail Gunner Monthly

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THE RAIL GUNNER MONTHLY

ISSUE 10

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## The Rail Gunner Monthly Staff



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41st Fires Brigade

"Rail Gunners!!"



Photo by Spc. Dalinda Hanna, 41st Fires Brigade PAO

Soldiers from the 41st Fires Brigade and other Fort Hood units, ride out of the III Corps' staging area during the Phantom Thunder Run IV, May 25. Hundreds of motorcycle riders participated in the 75-mile route through the Fort Hood installation and were given the opportunity to enjoy a relaxing trip with other riders while experienced riders showed the inexperienced riders proper riding techniques.

## Rail Gunners ride the thunder

Story and photos by  
Spc. Dalinda Hanna  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas—Hundreds of Soldiers assigned to various units across Fort Hood filled the III Corps parking lot with their motorcycles as the riders awaited their safety briefing in order to begin the Phantom Thunder Run IV motorcycle ride, May 25.

Motorcycle riders from the 41st Fires Brigade grabbed the reigns and set-up and participated in the 75-mile ride that focused on safety and riding mentorship.

Sgt. Todd McMahan, originally from Killeen, Texas and a Multiple Launch Rocket System crew member for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 41st Fires Bde., has been riding for 23 years and men-

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# RAIL GUNNER 6 & 9 SEND



**Colonel  
John C. Thomson, III  
41st Fires Brigade**

Dear Rail Gunner Family:

Thank you for your continued service and dedication to our Army as we get ready to celebrate our Nation's 235th birthday on July 4th. It is because of you that we enjoy freedom and our wonderful American way of life. While we enjoy a safe, relaxing four-day weekend, please keep our deployed troopers and their Families in your thoughts and prayers.

Rail Gunners continue to excel in many endeavors and June was no exception. Over two hundred of our Soldiers, led by 2-20 FA (*Deep Strike*), continue to expertly train U.S. Military Academy cadets at West Point, New York. They are at

the halfway mark of their deployment and daily we receive glowing comments on their outstanding professionalism and hard work. The *Iron Caissons* of 589th BSB conducted a rigorous field training exercise on Fort Hood this month, on the only night that we experienced a hard downpour, but successfully worked through it and solidified their status as one of our Army's premier logistics formations. Demonstrating their agility and versatility, the troopers of 1-21 FA (*First Strike*) underwent demanding training for non-standard missions in support of future operational missions, earning laudatory praise from the installation's leadership.

This year's All-Army Combatives Tournament takes place on Fort Hood July 20-24 at Abrams Gyms. Four Rail Gunner fighters are representing the Fort Hood team and we encourage everyone to come out and support them: SFC Ryan Hunt of 589th BSB, SGT Jason Reyes of 1-21 FA, SPC Brandon Minor of HHB, and SPC Jimmy Chavez of HHB.

Other upcoming opportunities in July include Freedom Fest on July 4th at Sadowski Field (with evening fireworks), the U.S. Army Soldier Show on July 7th and 8th, and a III Corps Training Holiday on August 5th. Additionally, the Brigade Change of



**Command Sergeant Major  
Kelvin Hughes  
41st Fires Brigade CSM**

Command ceremony will be held on Cooper Field on July 28th at 10:00 a.m. and all Soldiers and Families are invited to attend. If you have never seen a "Cavalry Charge," this is a superb opportunity to see the 1st Cav Horse Detachment in action along with our Rail Gunner Soldiers on display as we welcome Colonel Bill McRae to the Rail Gunner Family.

Our Nation, Army, Families, and Friends depend on you, so please practice sound risk management 24/7 and be safe and disciplined, on and off duty. We are honored and humbled to serve in your ranks and thank you for all you do, each and every day. Our magnificent Soldiers and Families make us

**Rail Gunner Strong!**

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*THUNDER cont. from Page 1*



Soldiers from the 41st Fires Brigade prepare to ride during the Phantom Thunder Run IV. The Rail Gunners motorcycle mentors set-up the 75-mile ride around Fort Hood.

tors motorcycle riders within the brigade. McMahan said that these rides help other riders become more comfortable with their motorcycle and teaches them spacing and communication while having fun.

"I enjoy these rides because I get a chance to talk to new riders and get them comfortable with riding in large groups," said McMahan. "It is important to constantly remain observant anytime you ride and to know about spacing and communication."

Spc. Bryce Honeycutt, a native of Pocatello, Idaho, and a petroleum supply specialist for HHB, 41st Fires Bde., said he learned a lot and it was his first time riding in such a large group.

"I had a great time and learned a lot about group riding," said Honeycutt. "This was my first time participating in a group this large and I learned the importance of hand signals and communication, because we

used them constantly. It was different than riding by myself."

Spc. Steven Medina, a native of Hayward, Calif., and a fire control specialist for HHB, 41st Fires Bde., said he enjoys these rides and that it is a nice way to

practice riding techniques.

"Motorcycle riding takes a lot of practice, so I think it is great that the brigade supports riders and gives us a chance to mentor each other," said Medina. "The group rides can be terrifying for new riders but when they complete a ride and learn the rules, they always are eager to ride more."

The motorcycle rides are a great way for riders to learn and practice communication skills and hand signals that will help them become better riders while making the lesson enjoyable. The goal is to have Soldiers that ride acquire the knowledge and tools they need to ride safely and effectively. The Phantom Thunder Run IV was successful and all the riders had a chance to hone their skills and learn new ones while having a great time.



Soldiers throughout Fort Hood ride out of the III Corps' staging area during the Phantom Thunder Run IV. The ride promoted safety and mentorship throughout the 75-mile journey and gave inexperienced riders the opportunity to ride with more experienced riders as well as, in a large group setting.

# Deep Strike draws first blood

Story and photos by  
Spc. Dalinda Hanna  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas— The 41st Fires Brigade hosted a blood drive to assist the Fort Hood Blood Donation Center and the Armed Service Blood Donation Program, June 14.

More than 80 Rail Gunner Soldiers took time out of their busy day to donate blood and support a cause to help fellow Soldiers both locally and deployed. A large quantity of the collected blood will go overseas to aid Soldiers who are fighting in the war against terrorism. Any blood considered extra will go to nearby hospitals.

Spc. Helaina Clausen, a native of Foster City, Calif., and a medical lab technician for Company B., Carl. R. Darnell Army Medical Center, said the turnout



Pvt. John Selman, a native of Bowling, Ky., an early warning system operator for Headquarter and Headquarter Battery, 41st Fires Bde., has a needle inserted into his vein during a blood drive. The 41st Fires Bde. hosted a blood drive to support the Armed Service Blood program and the local blood bank.

was more than what she expected.

"We usually do not have this many people at a blood drive, so I am astonished at the amount of support today, said Calusen. Pvt. Timothy Havenhill, originally

from Davenport, Iowa, and a fire direction specialist for Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Bde., donated to help others.

"I donated to help others because I would want someone to do the same thing for me if I needed it, said Havenhill. "I always give whenever I can because keeping our Soldiers in the fight is top priority and I want to assist my brothers-in-arms."

Pfc. Aaron Orr, from Plymouth Ind., and a multiple launch rocket system crew member for Btry. C, 2nd Bat., 20th FA Regt., also donated to assist Soldiers and said that a lot of people are able, so it is important for those who can donate.

The blood drive allowed the blood center to receive enough blood to send overseas. The Rail Gunner Soldiers once again showed their generosity and will continue to aid in the fight in whatever way necessary.



Sgt. 1st Class Sam Morgan, a native of Richmond, Texas, watches as Sgt. Christina Alkire, originally from Omaha, Neb., a medical lab technician for Company B, Carl R. Darnell Army Medical Center, draw his blood during a blood drive.



# Rail Gunner Volunteer of the Year

Story and photos by  
Spc. Dalinda Hanna  
41st Fires Brigade, PAO

FORT HOOD, Texas— Forty-two of the installations top volunteers were honored at a volunteer recognition ceremony hosted at Club Hood, May 24.

The Rail Gunner's volunteer of the year was Ruth Wheeler, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas, and the Family Readiness Group leader for Battery C, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade. Wheeler spends her time volunteering for the 41st Fires Bde., Race Against Drugs, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and several other organizations.

Wheeler said she volunteers her time because she enjoys helping others and said that she couldn't do it without the help of those around her.

"I am so grateful to be able to volunteer and help the com-



Ruth Wheeler, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas, and a Family Readiness Group, holds her Certificate of Appreciation at the Volunteer of the Year awards ceremony. Wheeler earned the title of Rail Gunner Volunteer of the Year and was the second runner up for Fort Hood's Volunteer of Merit.

munity," said Wheeler. "I don't think I did anything special and would not be able to do it without the help of the spouses of the 41st."

Samantha Cookman, a native of Miles City, Mont., and a

stay-at-home mother of two children, has worked closely with Wheeler for three years and said that she is a motivating and capable leader.

"I have learned a lot from Ruth [Wheeler] and she is always there for the Soldiers and Families," said Cookman. "She always appreci-

ates and praises those around her and that makes us want to work harder."

Debbie Jarzynkowski has known Wheeler since her family arrived to the unit and mentored her on volunteering and leading.

"Ruth [Wheeler] is very dependable and is always available to help Soldiers and their Families," said Jarzynkowski. "I taught her everything I knew about the FRG, and she has blossomed into a great leader who supports everyone around her."

Wheeler has proven herself to be a valuable asset to the Rail Gunner family. She has shown what giving is truly about on a regular basis.

"She is constantly generous and the Rail Gunners are proud of her commitment and thanks her for her time volunteered," said Jarzynkowski.



Ruth Wheeler, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas, and a Family Readiness Group Leader, is escorted to the stage by Col. John C. Thomson, the commander of the 41st Fires Bde., during the Volunteer of the Year award ceremony. Wheeler received a Certificate of Appreciation and a gift basket for earning the title of Rail Gunner Volunteer of the Year.



# *Throughout the Brigade*



## ***Rail Gunners***















# RE-ENLISTMENTS

## HHB, 41st Fires

SSG Joaquin D. Mullins

# PROMOTIONS

## To PV2

David Lopez

## To PFC

Shawn Campbell

Jaimeca Cooper

Christopher Hutchinson

Robert Roman

Sarah Wichman

## To SPC

Jonnie Karns

Amanda Meirs

## To SGT

Raymond Cardon

Waldemar Santos

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